



# Treasury Notes

WISCONSIN OFFICE OF STATE TREASURER  
"KEEPING AN EYE ON YOUR MONEY"

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## Treasurer Seeks Support for 4 Existing Positions

State Treasurer Kurt Schuller continues to lobby Wisconsin legislators for support of converting 4 project positions to permanent. To date, Schuller and Deputy Treasurer Scott Feldt have logged more than 90 legislative meetings since Fall on the issue.

"We're hearing a great deal of positive feedback in both the Assembly and Senate," State Treasurer Kurt Schuller said. "However, some naysayers now claim these are already permanent positions but with a sunset date and question why a change is necessary."

The Unclaimed Property Division in the Office of the State Treasurer currently has 7.95 positions. After these 4 positions are converted to staff jobs, there will still be 7.95 positions. The 4 individuals who hold the positions in question returned a record \$35,167,314 in unclaimed property in 2012 and processed 29,391 claims.

"If we follow this argument the positions are already permanent with a sunset date, why not just make them permanent? Does every single agency with 'permanent' positions have to undergo a review every 2 years? This is silly. The positions have been in existence for nearly 10 years. Why do we need to put these people through the anxiety every two years of worrying about their jobs?"

Schuller also points out, the 4 positions handle private information for citizens and prefers those people handling such sensitive data are permanent and invested in this agency.

"They should be able to solely focus on returning money to Wisconsin's people and businesses," Schuller said.

Schuller did campaign to eliminate the Office of the State Treasurer then drafted "Assembly Joint Resolution 26" to do so. The Legislature opted not to take action on the measure. Post AJR 26, Schuller concedes, there will be an election for a new State Treasurer in 2014 and the office will still exist.



## Schuller at 2013 NAST Legislative Conference

State Treasurer Kurt Schuller will attend the National Association of State Treasurers Annual Legislative Conference March 18-20 in Washington, D.C.

32 State Treasurers will meet to forecast the year's economy with legislators.

According to its website, NAST offers a variety of educational conferences throughout the year designed to assist state finance officials. These conferences provide NAST members with an opportunity to meet and discuss matters of mutual concern, as well as exchange information regarding best practices and innovative policies.



Treasurer Schuller White House Briefing

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# State Treasurer Launches 6 Compliance Audits

## While Seeking Sponsors for Amnesty Program Bill

The Office of the State Treasurer continues to educate and encourage businesses registered in Wisconsin to comply with state “Holder Reporting” Laws. In March, it launched the audits of Culver’s Franchising Systems, Inc and its subsidiaries; Ewald Automotive Group; Oakbrook Corporation; QPS Employment Group; Nicolet National Bank; and Quad Graphics, Inc.

“We expect all registered businesses in Wisconsin to comply with Unclaimed Property laws,” State Treasurer Kurt Schuller said. “There are some 150,000 registered corporations here. Only 2,550 filed reports with us last year. That needs to change. People deserve to have their money.”

OST is currently seeking sponsors for legislation allowing a compliance partnership with businesses to remedy this.

“We are PRO business, but the current statutes require we audit non-compliant companies,” Director of Unclaimed Property Mary Celentani said. “The focus will be to educate the business community rather than penalize it and to demonstrate that compliance benefits everyone.”

OST is pushing an amnesty program. Under that program, OST would allow Wisconsin businesses to report past due amounts without assessment of interest, penalties, or forfeitures. The idea is to encourage voluntary reporting.

Under Wisconsin’s Uniform Unclaimed Property Act, Chapter 177, the Office of the State Treasurer can impose penalties including 18% interest; fines of \$100/day up to \$5,000; and forfeitures of 25% of the value of all unreported properties should it choose to.

“We would prefer business compliance,” Deputy

Treasurer Scott Feldt said. “So we will give them that opportunity before we exercise our full audit powers. But in some cases, that may be the only option.”

Currently, OST works with six auditing firms specializing in unclaimed property.

In September, two audits were called against Brown Shoe Company and Vemeer Manufacturing. Both are out of State companies doing business in Wisconsin. Both regularly fail to report.

“Wisconsin is open for business,” Feldt said. “We want to help companies operate here legally. It’s a win-win situation for everyone.”

Typically, businesses will have payroll checks, expense and commission payments, refunds, worker compensation benefits, vendor payments, insurance and pension payments, dividends and other securities earnings which never make it to the hands of the rightful owners or heirs. But those assets are often not turned over by businesses to the Holder Reporting Unit of OST either. That is illegal.

Word is getting out. [CLICK HERE](http://www.pwc.com) to read article on [www.pwc.com](http://www.pwc.com)



## The Big Board

<u>Unclaimed Property (numbers approx)</u>		<u>Local Gov. Investment Pool—Dec. 2012</u>	
<u>February 2013</u>		\$2,421,657,140	December Balance
\$435,922,196	Program Value	\$43,768,984	Total Deposits
2,177,450	Number of Accounts	\$61,804,650	Total Withdrawals
		\$333,807	Interest Earnings
4,825	Claims Paid February 2013	<u>College Savings Plan—December 2012</u>	
\$7,041,417	Claims Value February 2013	580	New Accounts
		251,182	Total Accounts
\$3,442,924	Amount in Claims Paid (2013)	\$2,866,000,179	Program Value
2,309	Number of Claims Paid (2013)	<u>Board of Commissioners of Public Lands</u>	
		<u>(numbers approx) - December 2012</u>	
\$47,187.972	Amount Remitted from Holders (Feb. 2012-February 2013)	\$876,789,725	Assets or Principal
		76,348	Acres under Stewardship
7,141	Holder Reports (Feb. 2012-February 2013)	\$133.4 million	Aid to Public School Libraries (2008-2012)

## Wisconsin Treasurer Partners with WWBIC for “Wisconsin Saves” Through Special Blog Series

The Wisconsin Office of the State Treasurer partnered with Wisconsin Women’s Business Initiative Corporation for “Wisconsin Saves.” It’s the local initiative of the national “America Saves.”

“We are thrilled to support the notion of saving rather than spending,” Deputy Treasurer Scott Feldt said. “We would love to see people who receive checks from our office put them toward their future education or even retirement.”

Feldt and staff recently toured WWBIC’s offices in both Milwaukee

and Madison.

“I am impressed with what they do,” Feldt said. “What better way to build Wisconsin’s economy than to create more solid businesses here.”

Numerous partners are joining WWBIC to spread the message through promotional videos, including Wisconsin’s Governor Scott Walker, Lieutenant Governor Rebecca Kleefisch, and Deputy Treasurer Scott Feldt.

[Click here](#) to see video.

“Wisconsin Saves” provides tips and tools to help you set goals, pay off debt and start saving today.

OST will post those tips every Wednesday on its blog found through the agency website:

[Click here](#) to read blogs.

“Wisconsin Saves,” the local initiative of the national “America Saves,” is a social marketing campaign that encourages individuals to save money, reduce debt and build wealth.



## Treasury Notes

OFFICE OF STATE TREASURER

"KEEPING AN EYE ON YOUR MONEY"

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**WI State Treasurer**  
**Kurt Schuller**

**Wisconsin Unclaimed**  
**Property**

**EdVest, Wisconsin's**  
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The State Treasurer is tasked with managing more than \$400 million in Unclaimed Property. He also serves as Commissioner on the Board of Commissioners of Public Lands. Additionally, he is an avid promoter of Wisconsin's College Savings Plans and the Local Government Investment Pool.

**Unclaimed Property:** The office maintains custody and records for all property received under the uniform unclaimed property act and general escheat laws. Those with unclaimed property submit proper paperwork and examiners work to get their money back to them as quickly as possible.

**Wisconsin's "529" College Savings Plan:** Known as EdVest. The funds are managed by Wells Fargo Funds Management, LLC. You can open an account on behalf of a designated beneficiary and the earnings will grow state and federal tax free until the time the beneficiary is ready to continue their post-secondary education including two and four-year colleges, technical, vocational, and graduate schools. Wisconsin residents can claim up to a \$3,000 credit on state taxes per account.

**The Local Government Investment Pool:** This program allows local government entities to pool funds with state funds which are then invested by the State of Wisconsin Investment Board. Funds deposited in the pool are available for withdrawal on one day's notice and without penalty on interest earnings. Interest is credited to the local government accounts monthly. Average daily balance in the pool now exceeds \$3.1 billion.

For questions regarding "Treasury Notes", please email Cynthia Kaump, Communications Director at [Cynthia.Kaump@Wisconsin.gov](mailto:Cynthia.Kaump@Wisconsin.gov) or call her at 608-266-5757.

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It will continue to operate off of interest earned on the account holding all unclaimed property, rather than general taxpayer funds. He asked the Legislature to empower the Office of the State Treasurer if it will not eliminate it.

There is more than \$400 million dollars in unclaimed assets held by the State Treasury. This money comes from forgotten paychecks, insurance premium overpayments, utility deposits, forgotten bank accounts, forgotten stocks, abandoned safe deposit boxes and many other forms of assets that have been lost, forgotten about or that people did not even know they had! There are more than 2 million "properties" held by the Office of State Treasurer.

**Auction 1st Thursday of Month!**

[www.wismissingmoney.com](http://www.wismissingmoney.com)



T-Notes is a newsletter provided to Legislators, their staff and the Media to provide them with news pertaining to the function of the Office of State Treasurer. T-Notes is published at no cost to the taxpayers; the office does not run on taxpayer dollars.